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The Big Lie

Soviet Style

This is the first in a series of four articles analyzing the Soviet Union's campaign to discredit the West and sow confusion with deception, fraud and forgeries.

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Central Committee of the Communist Party, directly supervises its work. The schemes and themes of disinformation are planned by the party leaders and committee staff units handle the details. If forgeries are required, they are prepared by Department D experts or satellite intelligence services, often the East German and Czech.

The aim of the game is not simply to mislead and defame the Western powers but, through such weapons as phony "facts," fraudulent documents and false reports, to prompt them to take actions contrary to their own interests.

WASHINGTON — At No. 2 Dzerzhinsky Square, not far from the Kremlin in downtown Moscow, there's a rather ugly gray limestone edifice whose notoriety has been recorded in novel and news story.

It is the infamous Lubyanka Prison building, the end of the line for many an important "enemy" of Stalin and his successors, but in czarist days the home of the Lubyanka Insurance Co.

Since the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, the Lubyanka has also served as headquarters of the dread Soviet secret police, the Cheka, when it was first set up under Felix Dzerzhinsky.

Today the secret police organization is known as the KGB or, more formally, the Committee of State Security, and one of its busiest arms is Department D of its first chief directorate, popularly called the Department of "Dezinformatsiya" (disinformation).

A more apt name, according to U.S. intelligence experts, would be "Department of Dirty Tricks."

The key function performed by Department D, which was created in late 1959, is to help prepare, carry out and monitor deception/disinformation operations — an effort directed primarily against the United States ("Glavni Vrag" or "Enemy No. 1") and its allies. It has a headquarters payroll of perhaps 60 to 75 experts of various types. Its chief for a number of years was the recently deceased Gen. Ivan Ivanovich Agayants.

Vasily Sitnikov, an expert on North Atlantic Treaty Organization affairs, was No. 2 and may have been advanced to acting chief.

Underscoring the department's importance is the fact that one of the most powerful groups in the USSR, the

According to Helms, tricks are "used by the Soviets to plant a little 'plant' into a big lie few:

"One is to print a local rumor as a news article (in the Soviet bloc and free world press). Another is to lend the appearance of authenticity by replaying bloc media stories attributed to the Western press. A third device is to use the current Soviet press to prove that the current Soviet press are proven by secret Western documents — documents that exist as forgeries."

The major Soviet disinformation themes charge that the United States is an imperialist power bent upon world domination; that it interferes in the affairs of independent countries and that it connives against its own allies.

To promote these themes, the Soviets have peddled some fantastic concoctions.

Would you believe Nelson A. Rockefeller sent a "letter" to President Dwight D. Eisenhower outlining a cynical plan for using U. S. military and economic aid to press a world domination goal?

How about an "agreement" between Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi of Japan "to permit use of Japanese troops anywhere in Asia?"

Or a "letter" from Dulles to the U.S. ambassador to Iran, in which the secretary made insulting remarks about the shah?

Perhaps a "letter" from Dr. Frank B. Berry, assistant secretary of defense for health, to Secretary of Defense Neil H. McElroy in 1953?

This one had Berry asserting that 67.3 per cent of all flight personnel in the U.S. Air Force were psychoneurotic, many showing phobias, "hysterical syndromes and fits of unaccountable animosity."

Berry also "reported" that studies of chronic overstrain of the nervous system among Strategic Air Command pilots and navigators indicated "excessive and systematic use of alcohol (quite often even in flight), use of narcotic drugs (particularly cigarettes containing opium and marijuana), and sexual excesses and perversions."

For good measure, this line was added: "Moral depression is a typical condition of all crew members making flights with atomic and H-bombs."

The forged Berry letter first surfaced in the East German newspaper Neues Deutschland in May, 1958, and then was replayed in other Communist organs.

Later Soviet disinformation projects pushed charges just as far out.

For example, a "letter" dated June 18, 1963, from Sargent Shriver, director of the Peace Corps, to a representative in Ethiopia dovetailed with the

Richard M. Helms, director of Central Intelligence, has pointed out that the Russians "have a long tradition in the art of forgery." They produced the spurious anti-Semitic tract, "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," at the turn of the century.

Soviet forgeries began appearing in volume in 1937 and many of them have been aimed at American targets through a worldwide network.

"The CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) put these fakes under the microscope," Helms told the Senate Internal Security subcommittee when he was top aide to Allen W. Dulles at the agency. "We found that each Soviet forgery is manufactured and spread according to a plan. Each is devised and timed to mesh with other techniques of psychological warfare in support of Soviet strategy."

Helms listed three main purposes of the disinformation effort:

1. To discredit the West generally, and the United States and its government specifically, in the eyes of the rest of the world.

2. To sow "suspicion and discord" among the Western allies, especially between the United States and its friends.

3. To drive a wedge between the peoples of non-Soviet block countries and their governments by fostering the line that "these governments do not represent their citizens because they are puppets" of the United States.

The Soviets use a variety of types of documentary frauds, including the false news story, the distortion of a genuine document, the forgery, the fabricated account, the misquoting of a true account attributed to a nonexistent organization.

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